Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus comprising:

a compression processing section which compresses and encodes image data to form encoded image data;

a first storage section which stores the encoded image data;

a code separation section which separates the image data encoded by the compression processing section into at least two separated encoded image data in accordance with a separation scheme set;

a second storage section including at least two separate storage regions for storing the separated encoded image data, respectively;

a key information preparation section which generates, as key information which is being used to synthesize the separated encoded image data to reproduce the encoded image data, information indicating locations of the separate storage regions of the second storage section in which the separated encoded image data are stored and information indicating the separation scheme set which represents the locations of the separate storage regions;

a third storage section which stores the key information, the third storage section being separated from the second storage section;

a code synthesis section which synthesizes the separated encoded image data stored in the second storage section for reproducing the encoded image data, in accordance with the key information stored in the third storage section; and

an extension processing section which extends the compressed and encoded image data synthesized by the code synthesis section to reproduce the image data.

2. (Original) The image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the set separation scheme is to separate, the encoded data into direct-current and alternating-current components.

3. (Original) The image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the set separation scheme is to separate, the encoded data into red, green, and blue components.

4. (Original) The image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the set separation scheme is to separate, the encoded data is separated into cyan, magenta, yellow, and black components.

5. (Original) The image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the set separation scheme is to separate, the encoded data into data blocks.

6. (Original) The image processing apparatus according to claim 1, which further comprising an interface section to be connected to an external device to communicate therewith, said external device having a storage section in which the encoded data separated by the code separation section is stored, and in which the coded data storage control section stores the separated encoded data in the storage section and in the storage section of the external device, and the key information preparation section generates the key information including information that indicates a storage region in which the separated coded data is stored in the external device.